*267. [*The Questioners (Shri Pramod Mahajan and Shri Ashwani Kumar were absent. For answers* vide *Col* 34 *infra*].

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Proposal to convert the Railways into an autonomous/Public Sector company

*266. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a proposal under Government's consideration to convert the Railways into an autonomous body or pubiic sector company;

(b) whether it is also a fact that such a proposal is likely to make the operations of the Railways commercially viable and efficient:

(c) if so, the details in this regard; and

(d) whether any study has been conducted on the said proposal and if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) The proposal to convert the Railways into an autonomous body or public sector company was examined by the Railway Reforms Committee. They recommended that Railways should continue to function as a Department of the Central Government.

Setting up of Consumer Protection Forums

*267. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) what is the State-wise break-up of the District Consumer Protection Forums and State level Commissions established and working effectively so far;

(b) the details of Government's New Action Plan for consumers protection if any, to activate the District Forums and State Commissions in all the districts and States, respectively; and

(c) whether any of the Government services have been exempted from the purview of the Act; if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI NATHU RAM MIRDHA): (a) According to information available with Central Government, the redressal agencies under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 have been started and functioning in 15 States/UTs namely Andhra Pradesh (State Commission and 23 District Forums), Bihar (State Commission and I District Forum), Gujarat (State Commission and 3 District Forums), Goa (1 District Forum), Haryana (State Commission and 2 District Forums), Himachal Pradesh (1 District Forums), Maharashtra (State Commission and 1 District Forum), Orissa (State Commission and 13 District Forums), Rajasthan (State Commission and 6 District Forums), Uttar Pradesh (State Commission and 12 District Forums), West Bengal (State Commission and 3 District Forums), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (2 District Forums), Chandigarh (State Commission and 1 District Forums), Delhi (State Commission and 1 District Forum) and Pondicherry (State Commission and 1 District Forum).

(b) The Central Government is coordinating and pursuing the implementation of the Consumer Protection Act in all